

# Revision advice and tips for parents and carers of secondary school children who are neurodiverse.



The build up to the exam season can be a hugely stressful time in a young person's life – and more so for children who are neuro-diverse. Students with ADHD, Dyslexia and ASD all have weaker memory skills than non ND students.

## Techniques that parents could use that will help:

There are condition specific strategies but there is a lot of overlap.

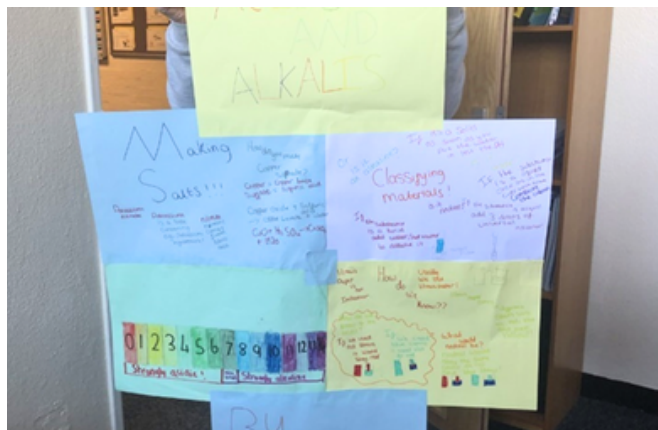
## Dyslexia

Revision is an essential part of the learning process for all students, but it can be especially challenging for those with Dyslexia. Dyslexia is a learning disorder that affects a person's ability to read, spell, and write. It can make it difficult for students to absorb and retain information, and it can also make it hard for them to organize their thoughts and ideas. However, with the right revision skills and tips, students with dyslexia can still excel in their studies.

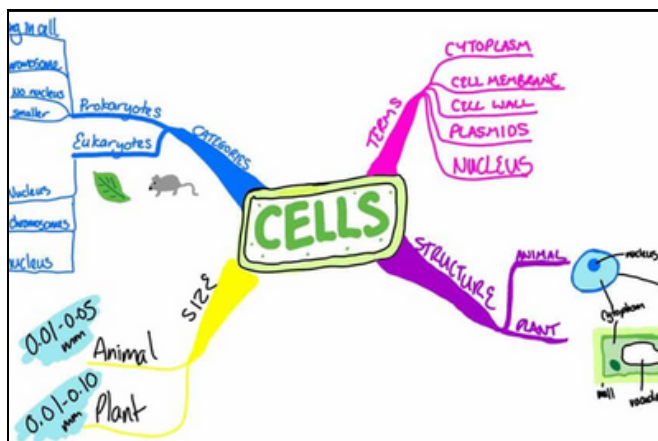
## Top tips

- **Break the reading material down into smaller chunks.** Rather than read a whole chapter or article in one go, break it into smaller paragraphs and chunks and work on one bit at a time.
- **Use visual aids,** or find visual aids online for your child's topic, ie graphs, pictures, diagrams, charts – anything to break up the body of the text and present the information in a different way.
- **Changing and varying revision techniques** is a useful tip for students with dyslexia. Different students may find different techniques to be more effective. For example, some students may find that flashcards are helpful for memorizing information, while others may find that recording themselves reading the material aloud is more effective. Experimenting with different techniques can help your child find the ones that work best for them.
- **Use assistive technology.** Assistive technology such as voice-to-text software can help students to read and understand text more easily. It can also help with writing, by reading back what the student has written and making suggestions for corrections. Also, Spell-checker and grammar checker software can be very helpful for students with dyslexia.  
[www.mycomputermyway.com](http://www.mycomputermyway.com). Website to help them adapt their computers to be dyslexia friendly.

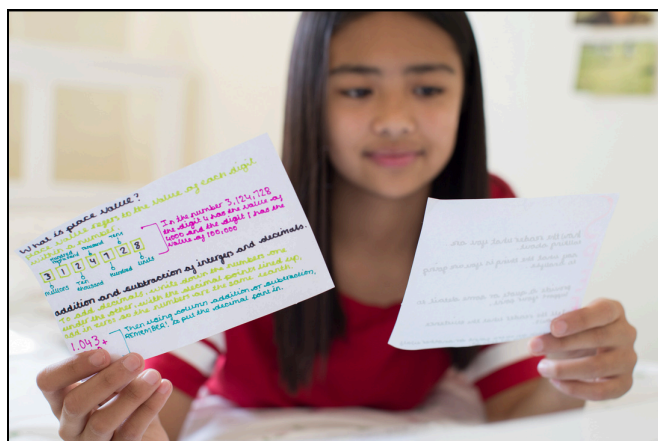
- Make visual, colourful posters of important information to display. Highlighted key passages and posts on a bedroom wall can be a useful ‘bigger picture’ starting point when considering everything there is to learn on a topic. Your child can ask for some large colourful paper from school.



- Mindmaps can help to break up the ‘bigger picture’ of topics into smaller sections. Later, ask your child to try to draw or recall the mindmap from memory, then check back to see what they missed out.



- Put key points on post its or revision cards and use images or pictures as visual reminders. These can be kept on hand for you to test your child when you have a spare 5 minutes.



- Encourage your child to read their notes out loud (or have a reading software programme read them) and also record their reading of them to listen back later. This can be a useful multisensory way of revising and help your memory to retain key information.
- Review past exam papers to look at the structure (how many marks per question and how many questions you must answer). Similar questions will come up again, so getting your child to practise answering the questions by bullet pointing the main points they should include in an answer. Your child’s subject teachers can provide past papers.

## ADHD and ASD

**Repetition** is key. Ask your child to tell you anything they remember about a topic and start from there. Research shows us that, if you tell a child with ADHD something once in a lesson, they have a 1% chance of remembering it. If you tell a child with ADHD something 3-4 times in a lesson, they have a 5% chance of remembering it. If you tell them over and over again over a series of weeks, they have a higher chance of securing it in their long term memory.

**Engagement** in their learning is critical for teenagers with ADHD and ASD. Give them something to touch and manipulate but only give it to them for certain activities, ie when you are reading at length or when you are giving oral instructions.

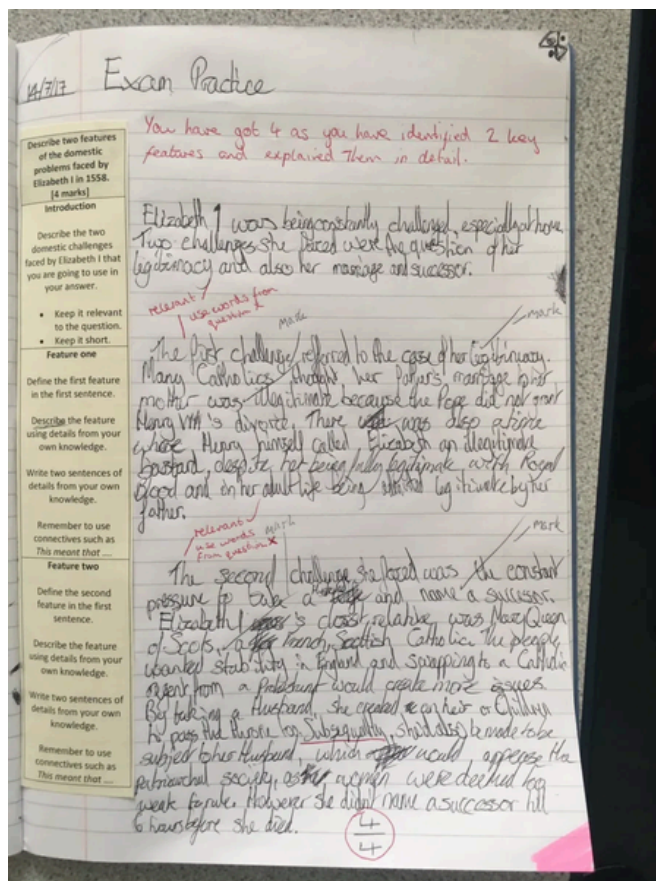
### Top Tips

- Make a timetable for revision and stick to it. Make it visual and include breaks. Build in rewards.

TIME	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	TIME	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
8:30AM-4PM	SCHOOL	SCHOOL	SCHOOL	SCHOOL	SCHOOL	9AM-10AM	BREAKFAST/SHOWER	BREAKFAST/SHOWER
4PM-5PM	HOMEWORK	TV/GAMING/SOCIAL MEDIA	HOMEWORK	TV/GAMING/SOCIAL MEDIA	HOMEWORK	10AM-11AM	REVISION - ENGLISH	REVISION - SCIENCE
5PM-6PM	DINNER	DINNER	DINNER	DINNER	DINNER	11AM-1PM	SEEING FRIENDS/LUNCH	SPORT/LUNCH
6PM-7PM	REVISION - GEOGRAPHY	HOMEWORK	REVISION - HISTORY	REVISION - FRENCH	REVISION - SCIENCE	1PM-3PM	REVISION - MATHS	REVISION - FLASH CARDS
7PM-8PM	REVISION - MATHS	REVISION - ENGLISH	FREE TIME	HOMEWORK	FREE TIME	3PM-5PM	OUT WITH FAMILY	SPORT/TV/GAMING
8PM-9PM	FREE TIME/SHOWER	FREE TIME/SHOWER	FREE TIME/SHOWER	FREE TIME/SHOWER	FREE TIME/SHOWER	6PM-8PM	DINNER/FREE TIME	DINNER/FREE TIME

- Help your child to **write or dictate everything they know** on large pieces of paper for each subject and stick them around the wall. Helping them to see that they only need to learn what they 'don't know' focusses the revision.
- **Have notebooks** around the house. If they start talking about a topic, note down what they have said because it is something they have remembered. Start from there. Keep returning to it. Low stakes revision takes the anxiety away.
- Help your child to **learn the types of question** on each paper and what they are looking for. Subject teachers can help with this if your child is not sure what the questions are.
- Talk about 'Betty from Preston', the person marking your papers. Tell students Betty does not know you and is just looking for where to give you marks. Make sure they understand they have to persuade Betty from Preston so that she has no excuse but to give you the mark. They need to help her to see that they know the full answer. It's no good having the answers in your head, you need to actively force Betty from Preston to give you the marks. What ever you are writing, would Betty from Preston understand and award a mark for it?

- Use **writing strips** – coloured strips alongside the questions. If it is a 4 mark answer, make the coloured strip the length of lines the answer should ideally be. Also, remind your child to use the key word in the question in the first line of the answer. Eg, if it is a compare, evaluate, explain, analyse question, practise with your child using that word in the first line of their answer.



- Work with your child to create a **revisional activity**. Model movement breaks with them, this could be a blast of cardio activity, revising standing up, revising on a trampoline – any form of movement based learning (your home becomes the classroom so make sure revision information is on the walls all around the house and get the child to find them). Throw beanbags (you ask a question and throw the beanbag), or hit tennis ball against the wall whilst they answer questions. Get your child to be as active as possible.
- If they have a **prompt, scribe or reader**, help your child by practising that with them. If unsure, your SENDCo can tell you if they have one of these exam access arrangements.

- **Connectivity** – ask your child how the information they have connects to other bits of learning in other topics/subjects.



- **Use assistive technology.** There has been a significant improvement in technology as a learning tool over the past 5 years. Mobile phones can be hugely helpful – make to do lists, use timers, record voice notes of revision. Google ‘assistive technology’. Time management is difficult for neuro-diverse students so any system that helps students to note-take in a visual format would be beneficial eg. Google ‘graphic organiser’ ‘knowledge organiser’ ‘mindmaps’.



- Use the support available on national websites. The National Autistic Society has good information on helping students with ASD to use inference skills.
- Help your child to put the exam into perspective. If they experience anxiety in an exam, encourage them to look out of the window or at the whole room and think about the bigger world and how little this exam is. Remind them that they can get a GCSE at any time. Resits are available. Exams are important, but there is a wider world out there.

### Helpful sites:

- [www.dyslexiauk.co.uk/learning-how-to-learn-revision-strategies/](http://www.dyslexiauk.co.uk/learning-how-to-learn-revision-strategies/)
- [www.dyslexiauk.co.uk/learning-how-to-learn-accurate-note-taking/](http://www.dyslexiauk.co.uk/learning-how-to-learn-accurate-note-taking/)
- [www.dyslexiauk.co.uk/learning-how-to-learn-memory-techniques/](http://www.dyslexiauk.co.uk/learning-how-to-learn-memory-techniques/)
- [www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/education/exams/parents](http://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/education/exams/parents)
- [www.theadhdadvocate.com/revision-tips](http://www.theadhdadvocate.com/revision-tips)